Colossians

Lesson #8

**Living the Resurrected Life Part #3**

(3:18-4:18)

Background:

Paul is writing while under house arrest in Rome (**around 62 AD**). This letter was written during that two-year period when Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon (the prison epistles).

The church in Colossae apparently got its start during Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus (52-55 AD). It appears that during this lengthy ministry in Ephesus, a man named Epaphras traveled from Colossae to Ephesus, heard the gospel, responded by faith to the gospel, and then went back to Colossae. Though his testimony about the person and work of Jesus a church formed where he appears to have become the initial pastor of the young church.

**Last week,**

We continued unpacking what Paul had to say about living the **resurrected life.**

**First, we saw how God describes us: Chosen, holy, and beloved.**

**Paul then outlined 12 things we should put on, like putting on a new garment:**

1. **Compassionate hearts**
2. **Kindness**
3. **Humility**
4. **Meekness**
5. **Patience**
6. **Bearing with one another**
7. **Forgiving one another**
8. **Love**
9. **Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts**
10. **Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly**
11. **Whatever we do in word or deed do it in the name of Jesus**
12. **Be thankful (x 3)**

**Continuing on, Paul now shifts to discuss living the resurrected life at a very deep and personal level. How we do it at home and at work. What it looks like when it is lived out there. He also addresses what the resurrected life looks like when it is lived our of our mouths, how it affects our speech.**

**For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (Mt 12:34b ESV)**

**Last week we looked at husbands and wives so we will simply read over those and pick up with children and advance forward.**

**SLIDE**

**18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. 4:1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

Next Paul describes living the resurrected life at the most personal level. In our home (husband, wife, mother, father, and child) as well as our workplace (slave or master).

**Continuing to look at Living the Resurrected Life:**

**VS 20 - Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**

**Vs 20** – explains how a child, or a teenager lives the **resurrected life.**

And as you might guess the verb translated **obey is a present tense imperative.**

The only limit God puts on a child’s obedience is when a parent demands something that is contrary to God’s law.

**The motive for the child’s obedience to the Lord - for this pleases the Lord.**

**The companion text from Ephesians provides more insight:**

“**1** ¶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."” (Eph 6:1-3 ESV)

In Ephesians Paul provides and additional command with an explanation.

Children are commanded to obey their parents in all things.

So it is the fifth command, but the first that comes with a specific promise to those who keep it.

**VS 21 - Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.**

The duty of the relationship is not one-sided, parents also have obligations to their children.

Written to fathers, the present tense impetrative is to not provoke. The idea of this Greek word is to **stir-up**, to **stimulate**, **exasperate**, or **to be hard on them.**

**This type of parenting from the father can discourage, dishearten, or break the spirit of a child.**

The companion text from Ephesians is similar with a little additional instruction:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph 6:4 ESV)

Ways we exacerbate our kids:

Overprotection

Favoritism

Depreciating their worth

Unrealistic goals

Not showing affection

Not providing for their needs

Not providing clear standards

Over critical

Neglect

Excessive disciple

Abuse

Not provoking our children to anger, not exasperating our children in essential if we are to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

**Vs 22- Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.**

We now come to a word for those in the ancient world were slaves.

By the way… Our next book focuses on a man who was a salve Onesimus and his master Phileomon. The book of Philemon, but for the moment.

Four points about slavery:

1. The word of God NEVER advocates slavery.
2. The word of God does recognize it is an element in some societies.
3. Both Jesus and the apostles provide insight into behavior if you are a salve of a slave owner.
4. In Paul’s day in the ancient Roman empire slavery was an established institution. According to Warren Wiersbe: ***“Slavery was an established institution in Paul’s day. There were 60 million of them and many of them were well-educated people who carried great responsibilities in the homes of the wealthy.”***

The Question…

Why doesn’t Jesus and the apostle condemn slavery, demand the slaves be set free.

Of course, I do not answer for God.

But I will provide two thoughts:

1. The goal of Jesus and the apostles was to spread the good news about the gospel of Jesus. It is the good news that can change a life, change a home, change a city, change a state, change a country, change the world.
2. The goal of the apostle was never social reform, it was spiritual transformation. For that is what ultimately leads to social reform, but social reform with spiritual transformation, leaves people headed for hell, but acting (at one point better).

In our day, we can use this ancient relationship and draw comparisons to a very common and modern relationship.

Bondservants, by way of application we will insert employees. This is not just Rich’s idea. Many great Bible scholars and teachers when they arrive at these verses, they discuss the ancient practice and then make application to the modern relationships of employers and employees.

Examples of those who do this include John MacArthur, Warren Wiersbe, and Alistair Begg.

So thoughts for those who still work for an employer. The idea for us as we think about ourselves as employees is three-fold:

1. “Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s." And they marveled at him.” (Mr 12:17 ESV)

and

**2) Vs 23 -**  **Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,**

This was one of Paul’s points about putting on the new man:

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

**3) Vs 24 -**  **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.**

So we obey our employer as long as that employee is not asking us to do something that God tells us we should not do.

But it also means we work hard for them, like we are working for Christ, we recognize that God will take care of us, even if our employer does not.

If these things **were true of slavery**, they are certainly true of the lesser relationship of **employer and employee**.

The earthly boss, the earthly master may not give the employee or the slave what they truly deserve **(by way of compensation).** The Lord will!

You and I can be sure that we are serving Christ and we will be compensated for our labor. If not in this life, for sure in the next.

**With a warning:**

**Vs 25 - For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.**

**The idea here is that the Lord will discipline without partiality when it comes to disobedience in his children.**

**Vs 4:1**  **“Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”**

Again, we make the application to employers and recognize that we are to treat employees fairly, justly, and (we can add) do all things in love.

Even if it means correcting behavior or performance.

We do so because…. **knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

When we say **“living the resurrected life”** it sounds mystical. When Paul unpacks living that life, it is extremely practical.

Paul continues with additional instructions for those who have been born again:

SLIDE

**4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison —  4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.**

**First:**

**Vs 2** - **Continue steadfastly in prayer:**

**These next few verses, at their most basic level are about how we talk to God (verses 2-3) and about how we talk to people (verses 3-6).**

The Greek word means to **devote yourself to something**, it means to be **steadfast** and **constant at something**.

The verb is in the **present tense and imperative mood.**

Paul is saying that you and I should **courageously persist in prayer.**

The companion text from Ephesians is very helpful:

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,” (Eph 6:18 ESV)

As you think about this, first it means to have a **God consciousness**, to **practice the presence of God**. To live moment-by-moment sensing the nearness of God.

**But it means more than that.** Paul is saying we are to be steadfastly devoted; we are to continue in, we are to push and persevere in prayer.

“1 ¶ And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’" 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"” (Lu 18:1-8 ESV)

Do you remember when God renamed Jacob, Israel? It was in Gen 32, where he wrestled with God.

**22** The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. **24** ¶ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25** When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. **26** Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **27** And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." **28** Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." **29** Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. **30** So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." (Ge 32:22-30 ESV)

**Second:**

**Vs 2** – **Be watchful in prayer, with thanksgiving.**

The idea of watchful is alert. Of course, at the most basic level it means to **stay awake**, but it goes beyond that and relates to be **spiritually alert**.

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."” (Mt 26:41 ESV)

But is also brings with it the idea of praying and **watching for fulfilment**.

**A family we met in Hawaii, the Lavaties, had a practice. The stones.**

Notice again, thanksgiving, Here Paul reminds us that thankfulness is to be a part of our prayer life as well.

So we are to be a thankful people, and that thankfulness should manifest itself in our prayers! **This is the speech of the new man.**

Notice, it is not only us always asking God for things. But it is us thanking God for what we have and remembering to thank God when He answers our prayers!

**Third:**

**Vs 3-4 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison —  4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.**

**What Paul prays for is most interesting.** A man locked in prison. Is not going to ask believers in Colossae to pray for his release. What would he ask them to pray for?

Paul asks the church to pray for him and those who are aiding him (more about that in a second). **That God would open a door for the word!**

So that they could declare the **mystery of Christ**.

We have looked at this Greek word before. The word is: **μυστήριον** (*moos-tay’-ree-on)*. It does not mean something mysterious or spooky. Rather this word means something that was hidden in the Old Testament (mysterious) that is now revealed in the New Testament.

Paul uses this about a few different mysteries in the Old Testament that have been revealed in the New.

In this case, I believe the **“mystery of Christ”** that he is referring to is what he called the “mystery of godliness” when he wrote to his young protégé Timothy.

**It is the GRAND mystery that God would come in the flesh and all that would happen:**

“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” (1Ti 3:16 ESV)

1. God would be manifested (made visible, appear) in the flesh!
   1. Men would crucify Him
2. The God-Man would be vindicated by the Spirit.
   1. This of course happened in the resurrection
3. The God-Man (the idea seems to be following the crucifixion)
   1. Would be displayed in victory before the angelic host
4. The Gospel (life, death, resurrection) of the God-Man
   1. Would be proclaimed to all nations (surprisingly Gentiles included)
5. The nations (including the Gentiles)
   1. Would believe on Him and thus be saved
6. The God-Man following a short time here on earth (43 days or so)
   1. Would be Exalted to the Right hand of the Father in Glory

**This is the gospel and probably the principal mystery that Paul had in mind as he asked he believers in Colossae to: “pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ”**

There is also the mystery of the resurrection:

“**51** ¶ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. **53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. **54** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." **55** "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"” (1Co 15:51-55 ESV)

The mystery that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the Jews through the gospel:

“**4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph 3:4-6 ESV)

The mystery that God would live in His people:

“**26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col 1:26-27 ESV)

ETC…

**Forth:**

**Vs 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.**

This is about our walk matching our talk.

This is Paul’s reminder that if we say God has made us new and live like the old man, that destroys the credibility of our message.

To walk in wisdom is to evaluate circumstances and situations and make Godly decisions.

**Fifth:**

**Vs 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.**

Again, even the mouth of the new man is different than the mouth of the old man.

What comes out of our mouths matters, it should be gracious and seasoned with salt.

To speak with grace is to say what is **spiritual**, **wholesome**, **fitting**, **kind**, **sensitive**, **purposeful**, **gentle**, **thoughtful**, **loving**, and **respectful**.

Seasoned with salt, is the idea that we should have as a goal of what we say, it should have an impact, it should have the goal of a positive effect.

**In Paul’s day salt was used to preserve and to season.**

**Final Greetings:**

We now move into greetings from Rome to those in Colossae and Laodicea. We will move a little faster through these:

**SLIDE:**

**“7 ¶ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.” (Col 4:7-9 ESV)**

**Tychicus was a native of Asia Minor** who became a Christian and a member of Paul’s ministry team. He is mentioned five times in the New Testament.

We read in Ephesians 6:21-22:

“**21** So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. **22** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.” (Eph 6:21-22 ESV)

So this Tychicus was not only a fellow servant in the gospel with Paul. He is more than likely the person **who carried the letters to Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea and the private letter to Philemon**.

The second member who would be coming with Tychicus is a man **(Vs 9)** named **Onesimus**. Notice he is a faithful and beloved brother, who by the way, **is also a runaway slave** (Phi 1:10-16).

**He ran away from Philemon. This we will work through as we work though the letter to Philemon.**

But notice Tychicus and Onesimus would give them a full report of what is going on in Rome.

**SLIDE:**

**Continuing with final greetings:**

**“10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions —  if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."” (Col 4:10-17 ESV)**

We see that others are with Paul:

**Aristarchus:** He was from Thessalonica (Acts 27:2).

He was a companion with Paul on the third missionary journey (52-57 AD) (Acts 20:4).

He was a “fellow prisoner” with Paul (4:10) so he must have gotten locked up for sharing the gospel too. He was mentioned in (Phi 1:24).

**Mark (the cousin of Barnabas):** We also know Mark by the name John Mark.

A few quick facts about him:

1. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey but left in the middle of the work (Acts 13:13) **(46-47 AD)**

1. Barnabas wanted to bring him on the second missionary journey, Paul did not. This created a major division between them that resulted in Paul taking Silas on the second and third missionary journeys and Barnabus going off on an unrecorded mission endeavor with Mark. **(50 ADish)**

“**36** ¶ And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." **37** Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. **38** But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. **39** And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, **40** but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. **41** And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” (Ac 15:36-41 ESV)

**Paul Mentioned Mark’s value:**

“Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.” (2Ti 4:11 ESV)

To provide some context, Paul wrote to Timothy in II Timothy when he was arrested again and sent to Rome around **64-67 AD**.

**We see Mark here with Paul.**

Mark would continue to minister to and with Paul

**Mark wrote he gospel of Mark**

The bets estimate for when it was written was around **53-55 AD**.

**Jesus, who is called Justus: This is all we know.**

**Vs 11b** - **These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.**

So clearly, Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were all Jewish Christians. We knew that about Mark.

**Vs 12-13 - Epaphras: who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.**

**Epaphras:** This was likely the pastor in Colossae and we see that he struggled in prayers for them. That they would stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

**Vs 14 - Luke:** This is Luke Paul traveling companion in the book of Acts, a Gentile physician, and the writer of Luke and Acts.

Luke was written around **62AD** with the book of Acts being written around **70 AD**. **Demas:** Unfortunately, Demas would later walk away from the faith:

“**9** ¶ Do your best to come to me soon. **10** For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. **11** Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.” (2Ti 4:9-11 ESV)

Again, Paul wrote II Timothy under house arrest (again) around **64-67 AD.**

**Vs 15 - Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to**

Nympha and the church in her house. Paul names this woman who has a church meeting in her home.

Keep in mind, there we no church buildings in Paul’s day.

**Vs 16 – And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.**

Most theologians believe this is a letter that Paul wrote to Laodicea that was lost to time.

We can imagine that Paul wrote many letters, but we have the ones the God has preserved that have been canonized.

**Vs 17 And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."”**

**Archippus Philemon’s son, he is clearly active in ministry. And Paul mentions him here in closing.**

**Lastly:**

**“I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.” (Col 4:18 ESV)**

Up to this point, someone has been writing this letter, possibly Timothy, here Paul takes up the pen and writes this final greeting in his own hand.

Remember my chains

Grace be with you!

**Devoted to Prayer by Virginia Stem Owens**

          Christians have always interpreted the splitting of the temple veil during the crucifixion as symbolic of their liberation from the mediated presence of God. Henceforth they were “free” to approach Him directly—which is almost like telling someone he is “free” to stick his head in the lion’s jaws. For once you start praying there is no guarantee that you won’t find yourself before Pharaoh, shipwrecked on a desert island, or in a lion’s den.

          This is no cosmic teddy bear we are cuddling up to. As one of the children describes him in C. S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia, “he’s not a tame lion.? [Jacques] Ellul is convinced that prayer for persons living in the technological age must be combat, and not just combat with the Evil One, with one’s society, or even one’s divided self, though it is also all of these; it is combat with God. We too must struggle with him just as Jacob did at Peniel where he earned his name Israel—“he who strives with God.” We too must be prepared to say, “I will not let you go till you bless me.”

          Consider Moses, again and again intervening between the Israelites and God’s wrath; Abraham praying for Sodom; the widow demanding justice of the unjust judge. But in this combat with God, Ellul cautions, we must be ready to bear the consequences:… “Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint, and he went away lame. However, the most usual experience will be God’s decision to put to work the person who cried out to him.… Whoever wrestles with God in prayer puts his whole life at stake.”

          Awful things happen to people who pray. Their plans are frequently disrupted. They end up in strange places. Abraham “went out, not knowing where he was to go”.… After Mary’s magnificent prayer at the annunciation, she finds herself the pariah of Nazareth society.… How tempting to up the stakes, making prayer merely another consumer product. How embarrassing to have to admit not only that prayer may get you into a prison, as it did Jeremiah, but also that while you’re moldering away in a miry pit there, you may have a long list of lamentations and unanswered questions to present to your Lord. How are we going to tell them they may end up lame and vagrant if they grasp hold of this God?"  (“Prayer—Into the Lion’s Jaws” Christianity Today Magazine, November 19, 1976, pp. 222–23)